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are made, the animal should be of a black colour. Black glass bangles will also be attached to her part of the shrine or found where she is worshipped. She likes the Tulasi plant and sometimes lives in it.

Occasionally she is a household goddess and is worshipped along with other household deities.

When the spirit of Kali possesses a worshipper, he can walk without discomfort or injury on spiked sandals.[1]

Kalka. Is one of Sharda's six sisters. She is seldom invoked, for according to Kols, when Shardamai or Kalimai are worshipped she is happy and pleased.

Khermai. This *devi* is probably the one most frequently worshipped by Kols. The Census Report classes her as the Earth Goddess[2] and Crooke[3] believes Khera to be the same as Khetrpal, the field guardian. Sometimes it would appear that the term included many kinds of deities such as Kali and Sitalamai. Her shrine is found in or near every Kol village, and she is always mentioned; it is also frequently claimed that she must be considered first, subsequently any others that one might choose. Sometimes she is called Bhagavati and is said to be the best mediator between men and Bhagawan, for if she is kept pleased and contented, one does not have to worry about Bhagawan.

Khermai's duties are manifold. She is the village watchman and protector. She wards off evil spirits and prevents their entry into the village. Sometimes her shrine is placed at the south of the village to ward off the evil spirits which so frequently come from that direction. In times of illness, she is invoked, and is thought to be intimately connected with disease; when one has smallpox she is worshipped in the person who is stricken. Cholera and smallpox are sometimes said to come directly from Bhagawan, and she is the best protector in case he sends them. On such occasions she should be given a libation of water and the village may be "tied" with her help.[4]

She is thought to help the Kols in all kinds of difficulties; she guards a man going on a journey; as he leaves, he may promise her an offering of a cocoanut which he will give if he returns safely. At set times she possesses her devotees, and through them reveals her will and answers their questions on problems confronting them. The sure test of her presence is the power to thrust an iron trident through the tongue or cheek.

1 See pp. 148, 180.
2 *Census of India*, 1911. XVI, p. 88.
3 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, pp. 92, 93.
4 See Chapter IX, Tying the Village.

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789 823 *Iron* is, on the whole, probably the most common of protective metals; and while some put copper above iron, nevertheless in the case of the Kols, iron appears to be more widely used than copper. The use of iron takes many forms. A woman should always have a bit of iron about her as she is usually exposed to evil influences more than are the men folk. This may take the form of a bracelet, an anklet, a ring on the finger, or an iron ring about the neck. Again it may be just a piece of the metal tied somewhere in the garments or on a string about the waist. [755] A sick man should always have iron about him to prevent further demonic influences during his period of helplessness. An iron key is a protective and even nails in shoes are useful in this respect. A piece of iron [513] ought to be under the head as one sleeps and iron nails are often driven into the four corners of a wooden cot should the Kol sleep on one. In the case of children iron helps to repel the evil eye. At the wedding [585] time the bridegroom carries iron about with him, and iron is found in the wedding booth.

Iron protects houses from the entry of evil spirits and makes their habitation there impossible. Therefore, when a house is built [343] iron is buried under the floor, particularly near the threshold. Even though unseen by the human eye it will influence the demons and [775] they fear to enter and abide in the house. Perhaps *bhuts* are thought of as still living in the stone age and dreading the new-fangled iron and its power to break the strongest things of which they know.

789 [314] *Lac*, obtained from the gum of the *Khairwar* tree (*Acacia catechu*), and prepared in the form of bangles and beads, averts the evil eye and wards off spirits. This is variously coloured.

Lampblack is widely used for children and protects them from [751] the evil eye. While it disguises them and renders them less attractive, it also has the practical purpose of protecting the eye from the glare of the sun. The lampblack, mixed with oil to make a paste, is placed just below the eyes and often gives the child a weird and unnatural appearance.

789 237 291 *Leather* is a very common devil-scarer throughout India and has its uses for the Kols, such as the custom of employing it in connection with the building of houses. For protection, in this instance, an old shoe will generally be found stuck somewhere about the wall which is being built. This is apparent in the picture appearing in connection with building customs.[1] If they can be afforded, leather shoes with nails in them are a double protection, and no Kol goes on a long journey with- [484] out taking a pair of country shoes with him even though he seldom uses them. He will carry them hanging from a stick or in his hands.

1 See plate VIII.